

CLAIMS

1. A method of storing and transporting drilling waste produced in an offshore drilling operation, the method comprising the steps of:

5 providing a moveable container for receiving drilling waste;

securing the container in a position below sea-level;

connecting the container to a drilling platform or vessel; and

10 conveying drilling waste from the platform or vessel to the container.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

releasing the container from its position; and

15 transporting the container to a drilling waste recycling facility.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2 wherein at least two containers are provided.

4. The method of any preceding claim further comprising the step of agitating the drilling waste within the container.

20 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the agitation step

comprises rotating or otherwise moving the container in the water.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the container is provided with external fins or the like which tend to rotate or move the container in response to sea currents.

7. The method of any preceding claim comprising the step of securing the container in position by anchoring the container to the seabed.

8. The method of any preceding claim further comprising the step of adjusting the buoyancy of the container, to maintain the container at a substantially constant depth.

9. The method of any preceding claim comprising the step of releasably fixing the container to the sea floor.

10. The method of any preceding claim further comprising the step of conveying drilling waste to a smaller volume holding tank on the platform, prior to conveying the waste to the container.

11. The method of any preceding claim comprising the step of macerating the drilling waste prior to conveying the waste to the container.

14. The method of any preceding claim further comprising the step of agitating the contents of the container whilst the container is transported to a treatment facility.

providing an additional container; and
maintaining at least one container at the platform or
vessel.

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17. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the securing means comprises an anchor means to be attached to the sea bed.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the anchor means comprises a base to be located on the seabed, configured so
5 as to receive and retain at least one container.

19. The apparatus of any one of claims 16 to 18 wherein the container comprises agitation means, to enable the
contents of the container to be agitated. } whole
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20. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the agitation means
10 comprises an internal rotating paddle. }

21. The apparatus of claim 19 or claim 20 wherein the agitation means comprises external fins mounted on the container, such that the container rotates in response to sea currents.

15 22. The apparatus of any one of claims 16 to 21 wherein the container is of adjustable buoyancy.

23. The apparatus of claim 22 wherein the container comprises a double skin, with a cavity between the skins which may be filled with air or seawater as desired, in
20 order to adjust buoyancy.



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drilling waste.

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